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SOME KURDISH PROVERBS

By D. N. MacKenzie

By chance the year 1957 saw the publication of no less than three major collections of Kurdish proverbs. Two are in the related dialects of Sanandaj, centre of Ardalan (Kurdistan), and of Sulaimaniya in 'Irāq. The former collection occurs as an appendix to the second volume of the valuable Kurdish-Persian-Arabic dictionary *Kitāb-i farhang-i Mardūkh* by Shaikh Muhammad Mardūkh Kurdistānī (*chāpkhāna-yi artish*) and contains approximately 900 proverbs and idioms. The second, entitled in Kurdish *Pand-i pēshinān*, by Shēkh Muḥammad-i Khāl (Ma'ārif Press, Baghdād) has approximately 1300 entries. The last collection, of about 350 proverbs, is to be found in a book of folk-tales, songs, etc., *Fōlklōrā Kurmāñjē* (Haypethrat, Erevan), in the remoter dialect of the Kurds of the Armenian S.S.R., compiled by the indefatigable Hājīē Jindi.

We are much indebted to these learned editors, for not only are the compilations of interest for their subject matter but they also show very clearly the value of proverbs as material for the dialectologist. In quoting and comparing a few examples, selected mainly from the first two books, my intention is both to bring them to the attention of a wider public and to support a plea that others, in the fortunate position of being able to do so, should record local and dialect forms of proverbs. Unlike many of the proverbs current in standard Persian, which are of literary origin, these local proverbs are often expressed in words which vividly portray rustic life and experience. They are a mine of vocabulary, both everyday and technical, archaic and modern. Moreover, they provide the only type of text which, while being a natural growth rather than a translation of an alien text, is often directly comparable with its counterpart in related dialects.

In the following selection I have included only a few of the many proverbs which are nearly identical in the two dialects. Instead I have concentrated on those which exhibit significant differences in form. After the two versions of each proverb (marked S. for Sulaimānī and A. for Ardalanī) I give a literal translation, as close to the original as possible. Unfortunately, most collectors of proverbs assume that their meanings are obvious or well known to the reader, but this is seldom the case when he is a foreigner. Indeed, the meanings of proverbs are often so elusive or ambiguous as to evade even a native collector. The explanations given below are based on the interpretations provided by Shēkh Muḥammad-i Khāl (for all that he occasionally mistakes them as texts for a sermon). Many of the proverbs naturally have more or less close parallels in Persian, Arabic, or other neighbouring languages, but the almost endless task of matching them I must leave to the reader. Only in a few cases do I quote a parallel from the other side of the Iranian world, from Pashto.

This is not the place for a grammatical study of the dialects. A description of Ardalanī forms the introduction to Shaikh Mardūkh's first volume, but being written in the dialect itself it is not readily available to the non-specialist. The dialect of Sulaimānī I have described in detail in my *Kurdish Dialect Studies I* (London 1961) and a comprehensive dictionary has since appeared (Taufiq Wahby and C. J. Edmonds, *A Kurdish-English Dictionary* [Oxford 1966]). Here I shall only draw attention to some of the chief differences revealed by these examples.

One is the strong Persian influence on the vocabulary of Ardalanī, in contrast to the Turkish and Arabic influence seen in Sulaimānī. For example, Ard. has *kār* (3), *zwān* (12), *čapat* (19), *mardim*, *pūl* (54) in place of Sul. *îš*, *qīsa*, *pīs*, *xałq*, *pāra*, and also *āhū* (2), *āsyāw* (3), *hajūr* (14), *qašaq* (48), where Sul. has the truly Kurdish words *āšk*, *āš*, *tirē*, *zwān*.

Although the transcription of the examples may not always represent the exact pronunciation, and therefore obliges us to be cautious in drawing conclusions from it, one difference is certainly accurately reproduced. This is in the form of the past participle of all verbs, ending in *-g* in Ard., *-w* in Sul., e.g.

xwārdig : *xwārduw* (4), *gayštig* : *gaištuw* (8), *dāg* : *dāw* (20), and similarly in the words for "man", *pyāg* : *pyāw* (13), "alive", *zīnīg* : *zīndū* (50), and "bead", *mūrig* : *mūrū* (51).

Ard. has verbs with infinitives ending in *-yān*, e.g. *kužyān* (34), *rižyān* (61), *dōšyān* (64), *xiliskyān* (72), which correspond both to intransitive verbs ending in *-ān* in Sul., e.g. *kužān*, *rižān*, *xiliskān*, and to passive verbs in *-rān*, e.g. *dōšrān*. Compare the pres. stems in **kinyē-* : *kanrē* (60) "be dug up".¹ Causatives are formed with *-in-* in Ard., *-ēn-* in Sul., e.g. *wiržin-* : *biržēn* (32), and the verb "to break" *škin-* : *škēn-* (11, 13). The verb "is" is *-a* in both dialects, but only in Ard. does the *-s-* reappear, either before or after another vowel, e.g. *has* (30), *kužyāg-as-awa* (34), *ča-s* (41), against Sul. *haya*, *kužāw-a-t-awa* (the origin of the *-t-* obscure), *či-a*. Cf. also Ard. *wa-s-a* "is like" to Sul. *wā-ya* (69–71). Both dialects have preserved the suffix, traceable in Old and Middle Iranian, meaning "also". Ard. has the archaic form *-ič*, Sul. *-(i)š*, e.g. *hiz-ič* : *hiz-iš* (41), *hāwla-yč* : *āwla-š* (48).

The proverbs below exhibit many other differences between the two dialects, too numerous to list. The full collections probably provide examples enough for a complete grammatical description of the dialects. I trust that this selection will serve to give an idea of the interest of the collections, in many respects, and of the value similar collections in less well-known dialects could have.

1. S. *agar kawl ū pōs(t) čāk a-bū ba šān-i xāwan-i xō-y-awa a-bū.*
A. *kalpōs xās bū-āyē ba kol-i xāwan-i-aw bū.*
"If the sheepskin coat had been any good it would have been on the shoulders of its owner." The implication is "practise what you preach".
2. S. *āsk-i na-gīrāw a-baxšē.*
A. *āhū-y na-gīryāg a-waxšē.*
"He is giving away a gazelle not (yet) caught." Counting his chickens before they are hatched.
3. S. *āš iš-i xō-y a-kā w čaqana dam ū dān-i xō-y a-škēnē.*
A. *āsyāw kār-i xwa-y a-kā, čaqčaqa sar-i xwa-y t-ērē-t-a ēš.*
"The mill is doing its own work and the tappet breaks its own mouth and teeth (A. brings its own head to pain)." The tappet (*čaqana*, *čaqčaqa*) is a stick, fixed to the near-horizontal chute at the bottom of the grain hopper, which is bounced up and down by the revolving millstone, causing the grain to trickle down. This is said of a person who talks a great deal about doing a job while someone else is getting on with it.
4. S. *aw xurmā-ya-y tō xwārduw-t-a danik-aka-y wā la gīrfān-i min-ā.*
A. *aw xurmā tō xwārdig-t-a min ba qilinčka-y bāzi-m kīrdig-a.*
"That date which you have eaten, here is its stone in my pocket (A. I have (already) played with its stone)." In other words, the trick you are playing will not catch an old hand like me.
5. S. *āw la sar ka tē parī, či yak gaz, či sad gaz.*
A. *āw la sar min bigird, či yak gaz, či sad gaz.*
"When the water has passed over my head, what (matters it) one ell or a hundred ells?" Jindī's version is a little further removed from the Persian: *āv ku dā sērī, či buhust-ak, či čār buhust*. "... what one span, what four spans?"
6. S. *āw-ē ba jōga-yak-ā rōišt har a-bē bi-řwā.*
A. *āw-ēk čū ba jōga-yk-ā har a-šē bi-řwē.*
"(When) a water has gone into a watercourse it must just go (on)." That is, it cannot stop itself: old customs cannot easily be changed.
7. S. *aw-i la kāsa-dā bē ba kawčik dar (d)ē.*
A. *awa la kāsa-dā bē ba kawčik dar t-ē.*
"That which may be in the bowl will come out by the spoon(ful)." "Truth will out": a threat to "spill the beans" is implied. Another version is:
S. *harči la dīza-dā bē ba askö dar (d)ē.*

¹ It appears to be an idiosyncrasy of Shaikh Mardūkh to write the *-y-* of such passive present stems with the letter *gāf*. The putative *-y-* forms are marked with an asterisk below.

A. *harči la dēza-dā bē ba kawčik dar t-ē.*
 “Whatever may be in the pot will come out by the ladle (A. spoon).”

8. S. *ba bwār na-gaištuw-a w darpē dā a-kanē.*
 A. *ba bigār na-gayštig šwāl a-kanē.*
 “He has not (yet) reached the ford and he is already taking off his trousers.” To meet trouble half-way. Cf. Pashto:
lā sind rāyəlay nə day aw bađa ye wṛunbəy wahi.
 “The river has not come yet and he is tucking up his drawers beforehand” (J. Darmesteter, *Chants populaires des Afghans* II, p. 223, no. 56).

9. S. *ba gut-ē bahār nā-yat.*
 A. *ba tāq-a gut-ē bahār nā-yat.*
 “Spring does not come with a (single) flower.” Jindī also:
bi gul-ak-ē bīhār nā-ē.

10. S. *ba huštir-yān wut, kuř-it būw-a. wut-ī, bār-ī xō-m la sar pišt-ī xō-m-a.*
 A. *wut-yān, wuštir, birā-t būg-a. wut-ī, bār-ī min har čil man-a.*
 “They said to the camel, ‘You have acquired a son.’ He said, ‘My load is on my own back.’” (A. “They said, ‘Camel, you have acquired a brother.’ He said, ‘My load is still forty maunds.’” A Northern Kurdish version (Roger Lescot, *Textes kurdes* I [Paris 1940], p. 199, no. 70) is:
mizgīnī dān-a kārī, gō, dahšak ži ta-ra bū. gōt, ēm-ē min kēm bū, bār-ē min zēda bū.
 “They gave the donkey the good news, saying, ‘You have acquired a foal.’ He said, ‘My fodder has become less, my load more.’”

11. S. *ba kārakar bi-łēy xānim, harči kāsa w kawčik-a a-y-škēnē.*
 A. *ba kārakar b-ēži xānim, harče kāsa w kawčik-a a-škinē.*
 “If you say to the maid, ‘Madam,’ she will break all the crockery there is.”

12. S. *ba zimān-ī ſirīn* (or, *qisa-y xōš*) *mār la kun (d)ēt-a dar.*
 A. *ba zwān-i xwaš mār la kunā dar t-ē.*
 “By means of a pleasant tongue (words) a snake will come out of its hole.” In N. Kurd. also (Lescot, op. cit., p. 217, no. 201):
bi xabar-ā xwaš mār ži kul-ā xwa dar di-kava.

13. S. *barz fīrīn mil-i pyāw a-škēnē.*
 A. *barz pařīn mil-i pyāg a-škinē.*
 “Flying high breaks a man’s neck.” This is said to be merely a counsel of moderation, but it suggests rather Proverbs xvi, 18 on pride.

14. S. *bāxawān la waxt-ī tirē-dā gö-y girān-a.*
 A. *bāxawān la waxt-i haŋūr-ā göčka-y nā-žinawē.*
 “At the time of the grapes (ripening) the gardener’s ear is heavy (i.e. he is hard of hearing; A. does not hear).” He does not want to acknowledge the demands, or needs, of the less fortunate.

15. S. *birā birā-ya, bāzār* (or, *hisāb*) *žyā-ya.*
 A. *birāi-mān birāi, kīsa-mān žyāi.*
 “A brother is a brother, business (accounting) is separate.” (A. “Our brotherhood brotherhood, our purse—a separation.”) Jindī has:
birā birātī, bāzār bayāntī.
 “A brother—brotherhood, business—savagery.”
 The sentiment is the same in Pashto:
wrori xori ba kawu, hisāb tar myāna.
 “We shall practise brotherhood and sisterhood (but with) accounting between.”

16. S. *čapla ba dast-ēk lē nā-dirē.*
 A. *ba tanyā das-ē čap *nā-kutyēt.*
 “A clap is not hit with (only) one hand.”

S. also: *dast-ēk ba tanyā, taqa-y nā-yat*.
 “A single hand, its clap does not come.” It takes two to make a quarrel, or a friendship. The N. Kurd. version (Jindī and Lescot) is similar: *dast-ē (bi) t'anē, dang žē nā-ē*.

17. S. *day-i dahōt la dūr xōš-a*.
 A. *day-i dawt la dūr xwaš-a*.
 “The sound of a drum is pleasant from afar.”
 A. also: *şadā-y dawt-a-siřnā la dūr-aw xwaš-a*.
 “The sound of drum and shawm. . . .”

18. S. *dār, lagat tō-m-a; diwār, gö-t lē bē*.
 A. *dār, la tak tō-m-a; diwār, bi-žinawa*.
 “Tree, my (business) is with you; wall, pay thou heed (A. listen).” There are other versions:
 S. *xasū* (or, *kič-im*), *lagat tō-m-a; bükē, tō gö-t lē bē*.
 “Mother-in-law (My daughter), my (business) is with you; daughter-in-law, pay thou heed.”
 Pashto has a very similar form:
lure, tā ta wāyom; nğore, ywağ pre wənisa.
 “Daughter, I am telling you; daughter-in-law, pay heed to it.”

19. S. *daryā ba dam-i sag pīs nā-bē*.
 A. *daryā ba dam-i sag čapāt nā-wē*.
 “The sea is not defiled by the mouth of (one) dog.” Similarly, in both dialects:
jōgala daryā lēt nā-kā(t).
 “A little stream does not make the sea turbid.” A lone detractor of a great man is disregarded.

20. S. *dāw-i-a la ḥawt āw, qul-i tař na-būw-a*.
 A. *dāg-i-a la ḥaft āw, qul-i tař na-wg-a*.
 “He has forded (lit. struck) seven waters, his ankle has not become wet.”
 S. also: *la hazār āw-i dāw-a, qul-a-pē-y tař na-būw-a*.
 “He has forded a thousand waters. . . .” He has learnt much from experience.

21. S. *dit bard nīa, la guł nāsik-tir-a*.
 A. *dit kučik nīa, la guł nāsik-tir-a*.
 “The heart is not a stone, it is more tender than a flower.”

22. S. *dit bō dit rēgā-y haya*.
 A. *dit ba dit rēga-y has*.
 “From heart to heart there is a way.” Love will find a way.

23. S. *dit-i kas ma-ēšēna; ka ēšān-it, bē-andēša ma-ba*.
 A. *dit-i kas rēš ma-ka; rēš-it kird, bē-anēš ma-wa*.
 “Do not hurt the heart of anybody; if you have hurt (one), do not be heedless” of the probable consequences. Khāl comments:
ka ūr-it wašānd, a-bē qałyān-it pē bē.
 “If you have brandished the sword, you must have a shield about you.”

24. S. *dīza-yak kaybānū bi-y-şkēnē taqa-y nā-yat*.
 A. *kāši-k kaywānū bi-y-şkinē taqa-y nā-yē*.
 “A bowl which the lady of the house breaks makes no noise.” Similarly:
 S. *dast-ēk hākim bi-y-biřē xōn-i nīa*.
 A. *das-ē hākim bi-y-wrē xōn-i nīa*.
 “A hand which the governor cuts off has no blood.”

25. S. *dū šūtī ba dast-ēk hał nā-girē*.
 A. *ba das-ē dū kālak hał *nā-giryē*.
 “Two water-melons (A. melons) cannot be taken up by one hand.” Do one thing at a time.

26. S. *gōza hamū jār-ēk ba sāyī nā-gařēt-awa la kānī*.
 A. *gōza hamēša la kānī ba sāq nā-ēt-aw*.
 “A water-pot does not return sound from the spring every time (A. always).” Tout passe, tout casse.

27. S. *gurg-a w la pēst-ī mař-ā-ya*.
 A. *gurg-a la pōs-i mēš-ā*.
 “He is a wolf in a sheep’s skin.” Also:
 S. *la pēst-ī mař-ā gurgī a-kāt*.
 A. *la pōs-i mēš-ā gurgī a-kā*.
 “In a sheep’s skin he is acting as a wolf.”

28. S. *hamū mal-ēk hanjīr-xōr bū-āya hanjīr ba dār-awa na-a-mā*.
 A. *agar gi mal-ē mēwa-xwar bū-āē mēwa ba dār-aw na-a-mā*.
 “If every bird were a fig-eater (A. fruit-eater) there would be no figs (fruit) left on the trees.” Khāl says that this is a tradesman’s excuse for not revealing the tricks of his trade, but it also reads like a justification for the inequality of society.

29. S. *har kas-a čāw-a-řwān-ī tōšū-y xatq bē la birs-ā a-mirē*.
 A. *har-ka čāw-a-nwār-ī tōša-y mardim bē la birsī-ā a-mirē*.
 “Whoever expects (to live on) the provisions of (other) people will die of hunger.” God helps them that help themselves.

30. S. *har sar-ēk sawdā-yak-ī haya*.
 A. *har sar-ē sawdā-yk-ī has*.
 “Every head has its preoccupation.”

31. S. *hatā māl wastā-bē mizgawt harām-a*.
 A. *tā māl wēsā-wē mizgit harām-a*.
 “So long as the house be standing the mosque is forbidden.” Do not give alms until your family is satisfied. Charity begins at home.

32. S. *hēlka ba bin-hajīl a-biržēnē*.
 A. *hilkā ba binagīl a-wiržinē*.
 “He broils eggs under his armpit.” He is young and hot-blooded.

33. S. *hēlka-y imrō la jūčik-ī sibaynē bāš-tir-a*.
 A. *hilkā-y imrō la jūjala-y sōzī xās-tir-a*.
 “Today’s egg is better than tomorrow’s chick.” A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

34. S. *jař kužāw-a-t-awa, čiřmin ba sōn dār-ā a-gařē*.
 A. *jař kužyāg-as-aw, čiřmin-a sōn čēw a-gařē*.
 “The battle has died down, the snotty one is going about in search of a stick.” This is said of any belated assistance.

35. S. *kā hī xō-t na-bū, kāyan-aka hī xō-t bū*.
 A. *kā hīn-i xwa-t nīa, kādān hīn-i xwa-t-a*.
 “The straw was (A. is) not your own, the straw-store was (is).” This is a reproach to somebody who over-indulges at another’s table.

36. S. *kar la kö kawtuw-a w kunda la kö diřāw-a*.
 A. *kar la kö kaftig-a, kunna la kö diřyāg-a*.
 “Where has the donkey fallen (and) where was the water-skin torn?” The meaning is, “What has what you are saying got to do with what I am talking about?”

37. S. *kēw ba kēw na-gāt, ādam ba ādam a-gāt*.
 A. *kēf ba kēf nā-gay bałām binyādam ba binyādam a-gay*.
 “(S. If) mountain does not reach mountain, (A. but) man reaches man.”

38. S. *kič-ek dāyk-i madh-i bi-kāt, a-bē xālō bi-y-xwāzē.*
 A. *kanišk-ē dāyk wasp-i bi-kā, a-šē xālū bi-y-xwāzē.*
 “(If) a girl’s mother (needs to) praise her, her mother’s brother will have to ask for her (in marriage).” Plainly nobody else wants her. Good wine needs no bush.

39. S. *köra, či-t awē? dū čāw-i sāy.*
 A. *kör, wut-yān, ča-t garak-a? wut-i, dū čāw-i sāq.*
 “Blind man, (A. they said,) what do you want? (He said,) Two sound eyes.” Another version is:
 S. *kör tā a-mirē ba tamā-y čāw-a.*
 A. *kör tā aw ūž-a a-mirē tamādār-i dū čāw-i sāq-a.*
 “The blind man, until (A. the day) he dies, yearns for (A. two sound) eyes.” Pashto has a version closer to the Persian:
rund la xwdāya cə ywāri? dwe sterge.
 “What does the blind man seek of God? Two eyes.”

40. S. *kučik tā na-jūlē (A. na-jiwē) sajīn-a.*
 “A stone is heavy so long as it does not move.” S. also, as in Persian:
bard la jē-y xō-y sajīn-a.
 “A stone is heavy in its own place.”

41. S. *kuř-i āzā māl-i bō či-a? kuř-i hīz-iš māl-i bō či-a?*
 A. *kuř-i āzā māl-i bō ča-s? kuř-i hīz-ič māl-i bō ča-s?*
 “What does a brave lad need wealth for? What does a cowardly youth need wealth for, either? ”
 The first can gain what he wants and the other will lose whatever he has.

42. S. *la barāz mū-yak bi-kirēt-awa walifat-a.*
 A. *la xirs mū-yk bi-kanit-aw, walifat-a.*
 “If (only) one hair be taken from the boar (A. you pluck from the bear), it is a duty.” The least harm you can do to an enemy is better than nothing. The pronunciation of Arabic *ż* (as here in *wazīfat*) as *-t-* is an affectation of mullahs, who have been known to inject a fine emphatic Arabic *ż* into such plain Kurdish words as *mināl* “child”, *bałām* “but”, *a-tē* “says”, etc. In the proverb it perhaps lends a mock air of sanctity to the “duty”.

43. S. *la hawt āsmān-ā astēra-yak-i nīa.*
 A. *la haft āsmān hasāra-yk-i nīa.*
 “In (all) seven heavens he has no star.” The star of his fortune has set. Pashto goes further with:
pa zməka kxe syoray nə larəl aw pa āsmān kxe storay
 “not to have a shadow on earth or a star in heaven.”

44. S. *lagał gurg šāi a-kāt, lagał mař šīn a-kāt.*
 A. *la tak gurg-ā gōšt a-xwā w la tak paz-ā šīwan a-kā.*
 “He feasts (A. eats meat) with the wolf and laments with the sheep.” A version from Erevan (from the newspaper *Ryā t’aza*) is:
gur-řā duxa (=di-xwa) lē xway-řā šīnē di-ka.
 “He eats with the wolf but laments with the owner (of the sheep).”

45. S. *manjał (or, qāzān) i mard-ān ba čil (or, hawt) sāł (d)ēt-a jōš.*
 A. *qāzān-i mērd-gal ba čil sāł t-ēt-a kuł.*
 “The cauldron of (true) men comes to the boil in forty (or, seven) years.” They are slow to anger.

46. S. *mārāngāz la gurīs-i ū sīpī a-sīlāmēt-awa.*
 A. *mārāngāz la gurēs-i ū bazing a-sīlāmēt-aw.*
 “The snake-bitten shies away from a black and white (A. mottled) rope.”

47. S. *marg lagał āwał-ān jažn-a.*
 A. *marg la tak hāwmāł-ā jažn-a.*
 “Death together with comrades (A. a house-mate) is a celebration.” Troubles shared are troubles halved.

48. S. *maymūn zōr jwān bū, āwla-ş-i dar dā.*
 A. *maymūn fira qaşay bū, hāwla-ş-i dar hāwurd.*
 “The monkey was very handsome; it produced pocks too.” To make the worst of a bad job.

49. S. *mēwa-yak ka gaî agar na-y-kayt-awa a-ganē.*
 A. *mēwa la tak gaî, na-y-kanit-aw dā a-kafē.*
 “When a fruit has ripened, if you do not pick it, it will spoil (A. fall off).” Nubile girls should be found a husband as soon as possible.

50. S. *mirdū ba palaqāža (or, ūwan) zindū nā-bēt-awa.*
 A. *mirdig ba palaqāžē zinig-aw nā-wēt-aw;*
 A. *am mirdig-a b-am ūwan-a nā-ži.*
 “The dead will not come alive again through thrashing about with hands and feet (i.e. kicking up a fuss) ” or “with lamentation.” A. also, “This dead body will not live (again) with this lamentation.” There is no use crying over split milk.

51. S. *mūrū-y hāwmāl magar ba şaw bi-kirēt-a mil.*
 A. *mūrig-i hāwsā-māl magar şaw bi-y-kayt-a mil.*
 “The beads of a house-mate (A. neighbour’s house) can only be put (A. you can only put) round the neck at night.” There is no point in stealing what you cannot use.

52. S. *na māl-i haya ūahmān bi-y-bāt, na dīn-i haya şaytān bi-y-bāt.*
 A. *na māl-ēk-im has ūahmān bi-y-wā, na dīn-ēk-im has şaytān bi-y-wā.*
 “He has (A. I have) neither any property, for Rahman to take it, nor any religion, for Satan to take it.” The epitome of misfortune.

53. S. *nēza la pēş-ā a-bē jē-y bi-kayt-awa, injā bi-y-dizit.*
 A. *nayza la bar-ā a-şē jēga-y bi-kayt-aw, aw waxt-a bi-y-dizi.*
 “First you must make a place for the lance, then steal it.”
 S. also: *rim jē bi-kar-awa, injā bi-y-diza.*
 “A lance—(first) make a place, then steal it.”

54. S. *pāra-y xalq kisa a-dirēnē.*
 A. *pūl-i mardim kisa a-dirē.*
 “(Other) people’s money tears the purse.” The sooner debts are repaid, the better.

55. S. *pē ba qad bařa-y xō-t ūā kēša.*
 A. *ba anāza-y bař-i xwa-t pā dā kēša.*
 “Stretch out your legs to the extent of your rug.” In Pashto it is “your quilt”: *domra pxe ugda wa ē comra de brastan wi.*

56. S. *pişila dam-i na-a-gaişt-a dūg, a-y-wut, sōr-a.*
 A. *kitik dam-i na-a-gai ba dūg, a-y-wut, sōl-a.*
 “(When) the cat’s mouth did not reach the fat sheep’s tail it would say, ‘It is salty.’ ” The version known from Aesop’s fable is also found in S.:
rewi dam-i na-a-gaişt-a tirē, a-y-wut, tirş-a.
 “(When) the fox’s mouth did not reach the grapes it would say, ‘They are sour.’ ”

57. S. *pişila gū-y ba darmān a-şyā kun-āw-kun a-y-şārd-awa.*
 “The cat’s dung was suitable as medicine (so) it would hide it in every (possible) hole.”
 A. *kitik wut-yān pē, gū-t bō darmān a-şē. kird-i-a ūer xāk-aw.*
 “They said to the cat, ‘Your dung is suitable as medicine.’ It put it under the earth.” Like a dog in the manger.

58. S. *pyāw-i nābūt xizm-i dūr ū qarz-i kōn ba yād a-kāt.*
 A. *pyāg waxt-ē mātił bē qawm-i dūr ū qarz-i kōna a-kāt-a yād.*
 “A penniless man (A. When a man becomes distressed, he) recalls to mind distant relatives and old debts.”

59. S. *rēwī xō-y ba kun-awa na-a-čū, hažg-ēk-ī ba kilk-awa bū.*
 A. *rīwī na-a-čū ba kunā-dā, hažg-ēk-ī bast-ū ba xwa-y-aw.*
 “The fox could not get into the hole itself; (what’s more) it had a piece of dry brushwood (stuck) in its tail (A. it had tied . . . to itself).” Jindi has a snake:
ma’r ni-kār-bū bi-čūyā qul-ā xwa, hažak ži xwa-vā girē dā.
 A Pashto version strives for the ridiculous:
məgak pa γār nə ū nənawatəlay, čaγ ye pa lakṣy pōre yuṭa kər.
 “The mouse could not enter the cave, it tied a winnowing sieve to its tail.”

60. S. *rīša-y dā-bastrāw ba kiz-a-bā hał nā-kan(d)rē.*
 A. *rīša-y bastig-a ba sūs-a-bā hał *nā-kinyē.*
 “A root which has taken (well) is not dug up by a gentle breeze.”

61. S. *rōn-i rīžāw a-kāt ba xēr-i bāwk-i.*
 A. *rōn-i rīžyāg a-kāt-a xayr-i bāwk-i.*
 “He makes the spilt oil into a charitable gift (in the name) of his father.”

62. S. *swār tā na-gilē nā-bē ba swār.*
 A. *swār tā *na-gilyē nā-wēt-a swār.*
 “A horseman does not become a horseman until he falls.”

63. S. *šēta, bō šēt-īt? a-łē, bō-m a-lwē.*
 “‘Madman, why are you mad?’ He says, ‘It suits me.’”
 A. *wut-yān ba šēt, bō ča šētī a-kay? wut-ī, bō-m *a-čilyē.*
 “They said to the madman, ‘Why do you act mad?’ He said, ‘It suits me.’” According to Khāl, this is said of someone who comes off well in any demand he makes.

64. S. *šir ka dōšrā nā-čēt-awa gwān.*
 A. *šir la tak dōšyā nā-čēt-aw gwān.*
 “Once the milk has been milked it will not go back into the udder.” Similarly:
 S. *tīr la kawān dar čū nā-gařēt-awa* (A. *-aw*).
 “The arrow (which) has left the bow will not return.”

65. S. *šūl ba tarī na-bē nā-čamēt-awa.*
 “A withy, (if) it be not while (it is still) moist, will not bend.”
 A. *tūl ba tarī na-čamēt-aw itir nā-čamēt-aw.*
 “(If) a withy does not bend while (still) moist, it will not bend any more.” You cannot teach an old dog new tricks.

66. S. *tā a-łēt ‘barsiła’ tirē pē a-gāt.*
 A. *tā a-yžē ‘hāla’ hayūr pē a-gayē.*
 “By the time he says ‘unripe grape’ the grapes ripen.” Said of someone who is always behind the times.

67. S. *tāl ū sōr-i dinyā-y zōr čaštuw-a.*
 A. *tāl ū sōł-i dinyā-y fira čaštig-a.*
 “He has tasted much of the bitter and the salty of the world.”

68. S. and A. *tēr āgā-y la bīrsī nīa.*
 “The sated is not aware of the hungry.”
 In the North, Jindī:
zik-ē tēr hā ž ē birči nīna.
 Lescot (op. cit., p. 209, no. 143):
zik-ē tēr hāy zik-ē birči tu na-ya.
 “The full belly is not aware of the hungry one.”

69. S. *wak kar-i nāw jōga wā-ya, la har dū lā a-xwāt.*
 A. *wasa kar-i nāw jōga, la har-tik lā a-xwā.*
 “He is like a donkey in the middle of a stream. He eats from both sides.” He is getting the best of both worlds.

70. S. *wak paštamāl-i hamām, har sāt-ē ba bar yak-ēk-awa-ya.*
 A. *wasa fōta-y himām, har rōž-ē hā ba bar kas-ēk-aw.*
 “He is like the towel of a Turkish bath; every hour (A. day) it is on a (different) person.”

71. S. *wak sag-i pē-sūtāw wā-ya.*
 A. *wasa sag-i pā-sūzyāg.*
 “He is like a dog whose foot has been burnt,” he is so restless.

72. S. *xiliskān tōla-y palakar-a.*
 A. *xiliskyān jīra-y palakār-a.*
 “To slip is the retribution (A. reward) of the hastener.” More haste, less speed.

73. S. *xōratāw-i qarāy göswāna dawām-i nīa.*
 A. *xwaratāw-i lič bān dawām-i nīa.*
 “Sunlight on the edge of the eaves (A. lip of the roof) has no duration.” The setting sun seems to be falling off the edge of the roof. This is said to someone who comes to help when the task is almost done.

74. S. *Xwā yazab bi-girē la mērūla bāl-i lē a-řwēnē.*
 A. *Xwā yazaw a-girē la mirōča bāl-i pē a-dā.*
 “If (A. when) God becomes angry with the ant He makes wings grow on it (A. gives it wings),” so that the birds can catch it. The Northern version is:
kō ajal-ē mūriē hāt čang ū par-ē wē čē di-bin.
 “When the ant’s hour of death is nigh it gets claws and wings.”

75. S. *yak-ēk rē-y āwāi-yān na-a-dā kači ahwāl-i māl-i köxā-y a-pirsī.*
 A. *yak-ē rēga-yān na-a-dā nāw āwāi, a-y-wut, māl-i qēxā kām-a?*
 “They did not allow someone to come into the village, yet he asked about (A. he said, “Which is) the house of the headman.” Cf. Lescot (op. cit., p. 193, no. 35):
jih-ē yakī li gund nīn-bū, di-gō, jih(i)k-ē min bi-bin māl-ā mālxwē.
 “There was no place for someone in a village (but) he was saying, ‘Take my bedding to the headman’s house.’ ”

76. S. *zik-ēk-i tēr la hazār zik-i birsī čāk-tir-a.*
 A. *zik-ē tēr la hazār zik-i birsī xās-tir-a.*
 “A full belly is better than a thousand empty bellies.”

77. S. *zurñā bi-dayt-a dast nāši fū a-kāt ba sar-a-zil-aka-y-ā.*
 A. *siñā bi-dayt-a das nāši w pif ba sar-a-gawra-ka-y-ā a-kā.*
 “If you give a shawm into a novice’s hand he will blow into the big end of it.”